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SPENSER AND THE THEOLOGY OF CALVIN

A previous paper has discussed Spenser's relation to the Puritan propaganda. It is the aim of the present paper to determine the extent to which he was in sympathy with the theology of Calvin. It will remain for a third and final paper to discuss his sympathy with the inner and essential spirit of Puritanism.

Spenser's theological ideas underlie so much of his poetry that the exact determination of these ideas is essential to the understanding of his work. These ideas find their most complete expression in the hymns of heavenly love and beauty, in the initial book of the *Faerie Queene*, and in the *Mother Hubberds Tale*. The *Hymne of Heavenly Love* treats of the three persons of the Godhead, of the angels, and of the creation, fall, and redemption of man; the *Hymne of Heavenly Beautie*, of God's revelation through the external universe and through the divine Sapience; the first book of the *Faerie Queene*, of man's repentance, training, and growth in the spiritual life; and the *Mother Hubberds Tale*, of the organization and life of the church.

There is a general correspondence between these poems and the successive books of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. This work is divided into four books: the first treats of the knowledge of God the creator; the second, of the knowledge of God the redeemer, in Christ, as first manifested to the fathers under the law, and thereafter to us under the gospel; the third, of the mode of obtaining the

grace of Christ, the benefits it confers, and the effects resulting from it; the fourth, of the external means or helps by which God allures us into fellowship with Christ and keeps us in it, in other words, of the church and of civil government. The two hymns are thus concerned with phases of theology variously considered in the first and second books of the *Institutes*; the *Legend of Holinesse*, with phases considered in the third book; and the *Mother Hubberds Tale*, with phases considered in the fourth. The examination proposed in this paper may well follow, therefore, this general correspondence.

In the doctrine of the Trinity Spenser shows himself in essential accord with Calvin. This in itself, however, implies no special predilection for Calvinism, since in this doctrine Calvin did not depart from the traditional Catholic theology. Arian and Socinian tendencies had as yet exerted but scant influence upon the mind of cultivated England; their adherents were to be found for the most part among the Anabaptists and other like sects. Another school of English thought was yet to arise ere these views could gain the advocacy of such men of intellect and letters as Milton, Locke, Newton, and Watts.

At first reading it might seem, to be sure, that the poet inclines to the Arian doctrine of the Son as of "like substance" with the Father; more careful scrutiny, however, disproves this. The passage involved reads as follows:

Before this worlds great frame, in which al things
 Are now containd, found any being-place,
 Ere flitting Time could wag his eyas wings
 About that mightie bound which doth embrace
 The rolling Spheres, and parts their houres by space,
 That High Eternal Powre, which now doth move
 In all these things, mov'd in it selfe by love.

It lov'd it selfe, because it selfe was faire;
 (For faire is lov'd) and of it selfe begot,
Like to it selfe his eldest sonne and heire,
 Eternall, pure, and void of sinfull blot,
 The firstling of his joy, in whom no jot
 Of loves dislike or pride was to be found,
 Whom he therefore with equall honour crownd.

With him he raignd, before all time prescribed,
 In endlesse glorie and immortal might,
 Together with that third from them derived,
 Most wise, most holy, most almightie Spright!
 Whose kingdomes throne no thought of earthly wight
 Can comprehend, much lesse my trembling verse
 With equall words can hope it to reherse.

Apart from the immediate context and from the remainder of the hymn, the words "like to it selfe" might well seem to show Arian sympathy; interpreted in the light of the context, however, they emphasize the essential unity, rather than the essential difference, of the Father and the Son, and mean that the Son, begotten of the Father before all worlds and of one substance with the Father, coeternal with him and sharing equally his reign, was essentially one with him. This interpretation is confirmed by a later stanza in which the creation of man is attributed indifferently to the Almighty, and to Christ as the Lord of Love.

Spenser's view here squares exactly with the definition of Calvin:

The Father, if he were not God, could not be the Father, nor could the Son possibly be Son unless he were God. We say, then, that the Godhead is absolutely of itself. And hence also we hold that the Son, regarded as God, and without reference to person, is also of himself; though we also say that, regarded as Son, he is of the Father. Thus his essence is without beginning, while his person has its beginning in God.¹

When we speak of the Son simply, without reference to the Father, we truly and properly affirm that he is of himself, and, accordingly, call him the only beginning; but when we denote the relation which he bears to the Father, we correctly make the Father the beginning of the Son.²

Spenser is likewise in agreement with Calvin in believing that the Holy Spirit is derived from the Father and the Son:

The mind of every man naturally inclines to consider, first, God, secondly, the wisdom emerging from him, and lastly, the energy by which he executes the purposes of his counsel. For this reason, the Son is said to be of the Father only; the Spirit, of both the Father and the Son.³

Spenser is also at one with the Catholic and Calvinistic doctrine of angels, common alike to the Catholic and to the early Calvinist, and shows none of the distrust of this doctrine which characterized

¹ *Institutes*, I, xiii, 25.

² *Ibid.*, I, xiii, 19.

³ *Ibid.*, I, xiii, 18.

the later Calvinistic thought. His stanzas descriptive of the nature and offices of the angels are substantially a poetical version of Calvin's prose statement:

There they in their trinall triplicities
About him wait, and on his will depend,
Either with nimble wings to cut the skies,
When he them on his messages doth send,
Or on his owne dread presence to attend,
Where they behold the glorie of his light,
And caroll Hymnes of love both day and night.

Thus reads the *Hymne of Heavenly Love*. The prose reads:

In Scripture, then, we uniformly read that angels are heavenly spirits, whose obedience and ministry God employs to execute all the purposes which he has decreed, and hence their name as being a kind of intermediate messengers to manifest his will to men. The names by which several of them are distinguished have reference to the same office. They are called hosts, because they surround their Prince as his court,—adorn and display his majesty,—like soldiers, have their eyes always turned to their leader's standard, and are so ready and prompt to execute his orders, that the moment he gives the nod, they prepare for, or rather are actually at work.¹

With the doctrines of the fall and atonement of man, Calvinism and Catholicism part company. As defined by the Synod of Dort, the "five points" of Calvinism are: absolute predestination, particular redemption, total depravity, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. Predestination is the eternal, inscrutable, and unchangeable decree of God concerning the salvation of individual men, whereby one portion of the race is elected to be saved, and the other portion is left to perish in sin. Redemption is particular in a twofold sense, first because the salvation of no one man could have been accomplished without the sacrifice of Christ, and secondly because each redeemed person has been the special subject of grace. Total depravity means that because of Adam's fall every man comes into the world in a condition of ante-natal forfeiture, is excluded from the energy of the Holy Spirit, and is positively inclined to evil. There is no goodness in him until the Holy Spirit puts it there. According to the doctrine of irresistible grace, God, at his good pleasure, exerts a new creative energy in certain souls, changing the normal character of the will of the subject and inclining it to

¹ *Institutes*, I, xiv, 5.

co-operate with God. Perseverance of the saints is the continuance in grace and certain salvation of those whom God has chosen.

The emphasis upon the doctrine of total depravity and of redemption in the *Hymne of Heavenly Love* shows how completely Spenser was in accord with these dogmas. Man's condition after the fall and Christ's redemptive act are thus set forth:

But man, forgetfull of his Makers grace
 No lesse then Angels whom he did ensew,
 Fell from the hope of promist heavenly place,
 Into the mouth of death, to sinners dew,
 And all his off-spring into thraldome threw,
 Where they for ever should in bonds remaine
 Of never-dead yet ever-dying paine;

 Till that great Lord of Love
 Seeing him lie like creature long accurst
 In that deepe horror of despeyred hell,
 Him, wretch, in doole would let no lenger dwell,
 But cast out of that bondage to redeeme,
 And pay the price, all were his debt extreeme.

In this hymn, as well as in the fourth hymn, the dreadful figure of a wrathful God, seated upon his throne, to be propitiated only by appeal to his "soveraine mercie," looms large. Unregenerate man is of the earth, wallowing "like to filthy swine," moiling his mind "in durty pleasures." "All other loves" save Christ are of "the world," meant to "blind weake fancies, and stirre up affections base." In its harshness and austerity, in its absolute denial of good in any earthly thing, this hymn is at one with the teachings of Calvin. One turns from the hymn to the chapter on the "Necessity of contemplating the judgment-seat of God, in order to be seriously convinced of the doctrine of gratuitous justification," and he breathes the same atmosphere:

The Lord weighs the hidden impurity of the heart in his balance. . . . To examine ourselves properly, our conscience must be called to the judgment-seat of God. His light is necessary to disclose the secret recesses of wickedness, which otherwise lie too deeply hid. Then only shall we clearly perceive what the value of our works is; that man, so far from being just before God, is but rottenness and a worm abominable and vain, drinking in "iniquity like water."¹

¹ *Institutes*, III, xii, 5.

Spenser's complete denial in this hymn of any excellence in earthly things is the more significant because in the two earlier hymns he had lent himself with generous enthusiasm to the neo-Platonic doctrine of love; the neo-Platonic doctrine with its emphasis upon the spiritual source and character of physical beauty; the neo-Platonic doctrine, a flower that had sprung and matured in the congenial soil of Catholicism.

These doctrines of depravity and redemption will be met again in the first book of the *Faerie Queene*, an allegory in which all of the fundamental Calvinistic doctrines are involved.

On a passage in this same hymn depends the interpretation of the poet's attitude toward the Eucharist, and, by implication, toward the sacraments in general. The stanza concerned reads as follows:

Him first to love great right and reason is,
 Who first to us our life and being gave,
 And after, when we fared had amisse,
 Us wretches from the second death did save;
 And, last, the food of life, which now we have,
 Even he himselfe, in his dear sacrament,
 To feede our hungry soules, unto us lent.

The Eucharist also figures as the tree of life in the *Faerie Queene*, and either the Eucharist or the sacrament of baptism, as the well of life. As the properties of the two are essentially the same—to cleanse from sin, to renew life, giving soundness to the sick and "long health" to all, and to overcome the ravages of death—it is of small moment, in determining the poet's attitude toward the efficacy of sacraments, whether the Eucharist and baptism are both involved, or only the Eucharist. The Eucharist also figures as the diamond box which Prince Arthur gives the Red Crosse Knight,

Wherein were cload few drops of liquor pure,
 Of wondrous worth, and vertue excellent,
 That any wownd could heale incontinent.

In calling the Eucharist "the food of life . . . to feede our hungry soules," in stating that

Life and long health that gracious ointment gave,
 And deadly wownds could heale, and reare again
 The senseless corse appointed for the grave,

Spenser seems to claim for sacraments an efficacy which Calvin would not allow, though it is true that the founder of Calvinism placed more emphasis upon the sacraments than did its later exponents. To Calvin the sacraments were "seals" which God placed upon his promises, since "they, by sealing it to us, sustain, nourish, confirm, and increase our faith"; mirrors, "in which we may contemplate the riches of the grace which God bestows upon us"; luminous intermediaries, since "it is easy for the Father of lights, in like manner as he illumines the bodily eye by the rays of the sun, to illumine our minds by the sacraments, as by a kind of intermediate brightness." Yet, though "the office of the sacraments differs not from the word of God, and this is to hold forth and offer Christ to us, and, in him, the treasures of heavenly grace," in reality sacraments are not indispensable, whereas the gospel is so, for, "this which is treasured up in Christ alone, we know to be communicated, not less by the preaching of the Gospel than by the seal of a sacrament, and may be completely enjoyed without this seal."¹

Spenser does not say which he regards as the more efficacious, yet in having Prince Arthur bestow the diamond box upon the Red Crosse Knight, and the Red Crosse Knight present in return

A booke, wherein his Saveours testament
Was writt with golden letters rich and brave,

he associates the word and the sacraments, as is so frequently done by Calvin:

First, the Lord teaches and trains us by his word; next he confirms us by his sacraments; lastly, he illuminates our mind by the light of his Holy Spirit, and opens up an entrance into our hearts for his word and sacraments, which would otherwise only strike our ears, and fall upon our sight, but by no means affect us inwardly.

In brief, while Calvin always attributes to sacraments a secondary office in the operation of divine grace, Spenser seems—though of this one does not feel sure—to attribute to them a primary office. For Calvin they are the "seals" of grace; for Spenser they seem to be, not the appended seal, but the very document itself. If this

¹ *Institutes*, IV, xiv, 14.

interpretation be correct, Spenser is not severely consistent, for there is no logical reconciliation of particular redemption and sacramentarianism, as Calvin partially recognized, and as his successors fully realized.

The *Hymne of Heavenly Beautie* is very like the *Institutes* in treating of God's revelation of himself through the external world of nature, and parallels the chapter in Calvin on "The knowledge of God displayed in the fabric and constant government of the universe." The thesis in each is that to him whose spiritual eyes have been opened by divine grace, the beauty and majesty of the universe are an avenue of approach to joyous contemplation of the divine wisdom.

The essence of Calvin's noble chapter is contained in the three following quotations, the first opening the chapter, the second appearing in the middle of the chapter, and the third at its close.

Since the perfection of blessedness consists in the knowledge of God, he has been pleased, in order that none might be excluded from the means of obtaining felicity, not only to deposit in our midst that seed of religion of which we have already spoken, but so to manifest his perfection in the whole structure of the universe, and daily place himself in our view, that we cannot open our eyes without being compelled to behold Him. His essence, indeed, is incomprehensible, utterly transcending all human thought; but on each of his works his glory is engraven in characters so bright, so distinct and so illustrious, that none, however dull and illiterate, can plead ignorance as their excuse.¹

Hence it is obvious that in seeking God, the most direct path and the fittest method is, not to attempt with presumptuous curiosity to pry into his essence, which is rather to be adored than minutely discussed, but to contemplate him in his works, by which he draws near, becomes familiar, and in a manner communicates himself to us.²

In vain for us, therefore, does Creation exhibit so many bright lamps lighted up to show forth the glory of its author. Though they beam upon us from every quarter, they are altogether insufficient of themselves to lead us into the right path. . . . Wherefore, the apostle, in the very place where he says that the worlds are images of invisible things, adds that it is by faith we understand that they were framed by the word of God; thereby intimating that the invisible God-head is indeed represented by such displays, but that we have no eyes to perceive it until they are enlightened through faith by internal revelation from God.³

¹ I, v, 1.

² I, v, 9.

I, v, 14.

Spenser closely follows Calvin:

Those unto all he daily doth display,
And shew himselfe in th' image of his grace,
As in a looking-glasse, through which he may
Be seene of all his creatures vile and base,
That are unable else to see his face,
His glorious face! which glistereth else so bright,
That th' Angels selves can not endure his sight.

But we, fraile wights! whose sight cannot sustaine
The Suns bright beames when he on us doth shyne,
But that their points rebutted back againe
Are duld, how can we see with feeble eyne
The glory of that Majestie Divine,
In sight of whom both Sun and Moone are darke,
Compared to his least resplendent sparke?

The meanes, therefore, which unto us is lent
Him to behold, is on his workes to looke,
Which he hath made in beauty excellent,
And in the same, as in a brasen booke,
To reade enregistred in every nooke
His goodnesse, which his beautie doth declare:
For all that's good is beautifull and faire.

Thence gathering plumes of perfect speculation,
To impe the wings of thy high flying mynd,
Mount up aloft through heavenly contemplation. . . .

Thus does the poet, like the theologian, show how the believer may approach God through nature.

The *Hymne of Heavenly Beautie* also makes clear the poet's acceptance of the doctrine of predestination, for though Sapiaentia pours riches in abundance upon him who is worthy, yet

None thereof worthy be, but those whom shee
Vouchsafeth to her presence to receave,
And letteth them her lovely face to see.

The first book of the *Faerie Queene* is an allegory of the religious life of man, his conversion, training, and growth in grace. In a sense, it is a poetical version of the third book of the *Institutes*, and illustrates all of the fundamental principles of Calvinism.

Inasmuch as holiness does not figure among the virtues in Aristotle "and the rest"—"the rest" being such writers as Piccolomini and Cinthio—there has been not a little discussion of Spenser's procedure in choosing, as the hero of the initial book of his allegory, the Knight of Holinesse. The explanation seems to be found in the opening section of the sixth chapter of Book III of the *Institutes*, in which, introductory to the detailed discussion of the life of a Christian man, the author contrasts the "plainness and unadorned simplicity of the Scripture system of morals" with the affected "exquisite perspicuity of arrangement" of "mere philosophies," by making holiness the very derivation and central principle in the harmonious attainment of virtue:

As philosophies have certain definitions of rectitude and honesty, from which they derive particular duties and the whole train of virtues; so in this respect Scripture is not without order, but presents a most beautiful arrangement, one too which is every way much more certain than that of philosophies. The only difference is, that they, under the influence of ambition, constantly affect an exquisite perspicuity of arrangement, which may serve to display their genius, whereas the Spirit of God, teaching without affectation, is not so perpetually observant of exact method, and yet by observing it at times sufficiently intimates that it is not to be neglected.

The Scripture system of which we speak aims chiefly at two objects. The former is, that the love of righteousness, to which we are by no means naturally inclined, may be instilled and implanted into our minds. The latter is, to prescribe a rule which will prevent us while in the pursuit of righteousness from going astray. It has numerous admirable methods of recommending righteousness. Many have been already pointed out in different parts of the work; but we shall here also briefly advert to some of them. With what better foundation can it begin than by reminding us that we must be holy, because "God is holy" (Lev. 19:1; I Pet. 1:16)? For when we were scattered abroad like lost sheep, wandering through the labyrinth of the world,¹ he brought us back again to his own fold. When mention is made of our union with God, let us remember that holiness must be the bond; not that by the merit of holiness we come into communion with him (we ought rather first to cleave to him, in order that, pervaded with his holiness, we may follow whither he calls), but because it greatly concerns his glory not to have any fellowship with wickedness and impurity. Wherefore he tells us that this is the end of our calling, the end to which we ought ever to have respect, if we would answer the call of God. For to what end were

¹ Compare with the opening canto of the *Faerie Queene*.

we rescued from the iniquity and pollution of the world into which we were plunged, if we allow ourselves, during our whole lives, to wallow in them? Besides, we are at the same time admonished, that if we would be regarded as the Lord's people, we must inhabit the holy city Jerusalem (Isaiah 35:8, et alibi), which, as he hath consecrated it to himself, it were impious for its inhabitants to profane by impurity. Hence the expression, "who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness" (Ps. 15:1, 2; 24:3, 4); for the sanctuary in which he dwells certainly ought not to be like an unclean stall.

The better to arouse us, it exhibits God the Father who, as he hath reconciled us to himself in his Anointed, has impressed his image upon us, to which he would have us to be conformed (Rom. 5:4). Come, then, and let them show me a more excellent system among philosophers, who think that they only have a moral philosophy duly and orderly arranged. They, when they would give excellent exhortation to virtue, can only tell us to live agreeably to nature. Scripture derives its exhortation from the true source, when it not only enjoins us to regulate our lives with a view to God its author to whom it belongs; but after showing us that we have degenerated from our true origin, viz., the law of our Creator, adds, that Christ, through whom we have returned to favour with God, is set before us as a model, the image of which our lives should express. What do you require more effectual than this? Nay, what do you require beyond this? If the Lord adopts us for his sons on the condition that our life be a representation of Christ, the bond of our adoption, then, unless we dedicate and devote ourselves to righteousness, we not only, with the utmost perfidy, revolt from our Creator, but also abjure the Saviour himself. Then, from an enumeration of all the blessings of God, and each part of our salvation, it finds materials for exhortation. Ever since God exhibited himself to us as a Father, we must be convicted of extreme ingratitude if we do not in turn exhibit ourselves as his sons. Ever since Christ purified us by the laver of his blood, and communicated this purification by baptism, it would ill become us to be defiled with new pollution. Ever since he ingrafted us into his body, we, who are his members, should anxiously beware of contracting any stain or taint. Ever since he who is our head ascended to heaven, it is befitting in us to withdraw our affections from the earth, and with our whole soul aspire to heaven. Ever since the Holy Spirit dedicated us as temples to the Lord, we should make it our endeavour to show forth the glory of God, and guard against being profaned by the defilement of sin. Ever since our soul and body were destined to heavenly incorruptibility and an unfading crown, we should earnestly strive to keep them pure and uncorrupted against the day of the Lord. These, I say, are the secret foundations of a well-regulated life, and you will search in vain for anything resembling them among philosophers, who, in their commendation of virtue, never rise higher than the natural dignity of man.

According to Calvin, then, the discipline of life is primarily that we may obtain righteousness; therefore Spenser, obedient to the teachings of his theological master, makes the pursuit of holiness the first consideration and chiefest concern in "fashioning a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline."

Though man must obey the solemn command "Be ye holy, for I am holy," he is of himself impotent and can do nothing; he must therefore rely wholly upon God who can make of him whom he has chosen to elect, a new creature, and he must not ascribe any excellence to himself. Calvin says:

Everything good in the will is entirely the result of grace. . . . All the fruits of good works are originally and immediately from God. Hence the Psalmist, after saying that the Lord "hath made us," to deprive us of all share in the work, immediately adds, "not we ourselves." That he is speaking of regeneration, which is the commencement of the spiritual life, is obvious from the context, in which the next words are, "we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." Not contented with simply giving God the praise of our salvation, he distinctly excludes us from all share in it, just as if he had said that not one particle remains to man as a ground of boasting. The whole is of God. . . . But since Scripture proclaims throughout that it is the free gift of God, it follows, that when men, who are with their whole soul naturally prone to evil, begin to have a good will, it is owing to mere grace. Therefore, when the Lord, in the conversion of his people, sets down these two things as requisite to be done, viz., to take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh, he openly declares, that, in order to our conversion to righteousness, what is ours must be taken away, and that which is substituted in the place is of himself. . . . He could not more clearly claim to himself, and deny to us, everything good and right in our will, than by declaring, that in our conversion there is the creation of a new spirit and a new heart. It always follows both that nothing good can proceed from our will, until it be formed again, and that after it is formed again, in so far as it is good, it is of God, and not of us.¹

In the spirit of this theology, Spenser chooses as the hero of the first book "a tall clownish young man" who "rested him on the floore, unfitte through his rusticity for a better place," yet who, when clad in the armor of a Christian man, "seemed the goodliest man in all that company," so recreated was he by the grace of God.

It is thus the grace of God that converts this rustic into a professed knight of holiness, and likewise it is the grace of God alone

¹ II, iii, 7-8.

that establishes him as an actual knight of holiness. Thus trusting in his own strength, he is overcome of Orgoglio, and only released by Prince Arthur, the personification of the grace of God. Again he becomes the victim of religious melancholia, as he reflects how just it is for the sinner to die, and is only saved when Una—Truth—snatches the dagger from his hesitant hand, and reminds him that he is one of God's *elect*, and that "where justice growes, there grows eke greater grace." The lesson is driven home by the poet, who, in his own person, reflects:

What man is he, that boasts of fleshly might
And vaine assurance of mortality,
Which, all so soone as it doth come to fight
Against spirituall foes, yields by and by,
Or from the field most cowardly doth fly!
Ne let the man ascribe it to his skill,
That thorough grace hath gained victory:
If any strength we have, it is to ill,
But all the good is Gods, both power and eke will.¹

It is the less necessary to examine in detail the entire book in the light of the Calvinistic system, inasmuch as the episode of the House of Holiness is a pictorial setting-forth in systematic form of the mode of obtaining the grace of God, and of Christian growth therein.

To this House of Holiness Una conducts the Red Crosse Knight that he may be trained. Arrived there, they find the door locked, but it is opened by the porter, Humilitie, for, according to Calvin, who borrows the words of St. Chrysostom, "the foundation of our philosophy is humility."²

Consider, first, that there is no access to salvation unless all pride is laid aside and true humility embraced; secondly, that that humility is not a kind of moderation by which you yield to God some article of your right, . . . but that it is the unfeigned submission of a mind overwhelmed by a serious conviction of its want and misery.³

Entered within a spacious court, they are met by a franklin, Zeal, for, as Calvin recommends, "Let this, then, be the first step, to abandon ourselves, and devote the whole energy of our minds to the service of God."⁴

¹ *F.Q.*, I, x, 1.

² II, ii, 11.

³ III, xii, 6. Note that the Red Crosse Knight had just had two crushing lessons in humility in his encounters with Orgoglio and Despair.

⁴ III, vii, 1.

Next they come to a hall and are received by Reverence, for "men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their insignificance, until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God."¹

Next they are received by Coelia, who stands for the heavenly mysteries, as she is the Dame of the house, and the mother of the Christian virtues. As they converse,

Loe! two most goodly virgins came in place,
Ylinked arme in arme in lovely wise.

In like manner Calvin associates faith and hope, inasmuch as, "Wherever this living faith exists, it must have the hope of eternall life as its inseparable companion."²

Una now requests Fidelia to school her knight in heavenly learning and celestial discipline. Accordingly, Fidelia opens her book, that none untaught could read, and teaches of God, of grace, of justice, and of free-will—the very core of Calvinistic doctrine. The Knight is soon stricken with the consciousness of sin. That faith precedes repentance in point of time, and that repentance is induced by faith in point of experience is likewise Calvin's teaching:

That repentance not only always follows faith, but is produced by it, ought to be without controversy. . . . Those who think that repentance precedes faith instead of following from, or being produced by it, as the fruit by the tree, have never understood its nature."³

The Knight, bowed by a sense of guilt, and fearful that he cannot escape, is comforted by Speranza. "The Lord often keeps us in suspense," says Calvin, "by delaying the fulfillment of his promises much longer than we could wish. Here the office of hope is to perform what the prophet enjoins, 'Though it tarry, wait for it.'"⁴

Una reports the condition of her knight to Coelia who fetches the leech, Patience. Patience disciplines him by fasting and prayer, Penance and Remorse straiten him, and Repentance washes away his stain. So Calvin writes:

Moreover as hatred of sin, which is the beginning of repentance, first gives us access to the knowledge of Christ, who manifests himself to none but miserable and afflicted sinners, groaning, labouring, burdened, hungry, and thirsty, pining away with grief and wretchedness, so if we would stand

¹ I, i, 3.

² III, ii, 42.

³ III, iii, 1.

⁴ III, ii, 42.

in Christ, we must aim at repentance, cultivate it during our whole lives, and continue it to the last.¹

Thus restored, the Knight is presented to Charissa, who instructs him in love, righteousness, and well to donne, and then consigns him to the tutelage of Mercy. Mercy in turn conducts him through the hospital of self-denial and good deeds. Finally he ascends the hill of Contemplation, where the ancient sage points out to him first the steep, long path leading to the heavenly city, and then the very city itself. These concluding episodes closely parallel chapters seven, eight, and nine of Book Three, the first two giving a summary of the Christian life as expressed in self-denial and bearing the cross, and the last treating of the office of meditation on the future life. The hospital of Mercy illustrates the divine command to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, bind up the broken-hearted, care for the widows and orphans. Calvin makes Mercy the handmaid of Charity and summarizes the principle of good deeds, amplified into many pages, in the following words:

Let this, then, be our method of showing good-will and kindness, considering that, in regard to everything which God has bestowed upon us, and by which we can aid our neighbors, we are his stewards, and are bound to give account of our stewardship; moreover, that the only right mode of administration is that which is regulated by love.²

The chapter on meditation is an exhortation to the faithful to fix their eyes upon the celestial life, and "by raising their mind to heaven, become superior to all that is in the world."³

Thus it is seen how essentially Calvinistic is the first book of the *Faerie Queene* and how closely the theologian's exposition of the Christian life, and the poet's allegory of it, parallel one another.

The second book, while not primarily theological, shows how completely Spenser sympathized with Calvin's views on temperance, as unfolded in the tenth chapter of Book III of the *Institutes*, entitled, "How to use the present life and the comforts of it." The thesis of the chapter is that, since we are only to pass through the earth, we should use its blessings only in so far as they assist our progress, rather than retard it. It is the doctrine of the golden mean:

Let this be our principle, that we err not in the use of the gifts of Providence when we refer them to the end for which their author made and

¹ III, iii, 20.

² III, vii, 5.

³ III, ix, 6.

destined them, since he created them for our good, and not for our destruction. No man will keep the true path better than he who shall have this end carefully in view. Now, then, if we consider for what end he created food, we shall find that he consulted not only for our necessity, but also for our enjoyment and delight. Thus, in clothing the end was, in addition to necessity, comeliness and honour; and in herbs, fruits, and trees, besides their various uses, gracefulness of appearance and sweetness of smell. Were it not so, the Prophet would not enumerate among the mercies of God "wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine." . . . Have done, then, with the inhuman philosophy which, in allowing no use of the creatures but for necessity, not only maliciously deprives us of the lawful fruit of the divine beneficence, but cannot be realized without depriving man of all his senses, and reducing him to a block. But, on the other hand, let us with no less care, guard against the lusts of the flesh, which, if not kept in order, break through all bounds. . . . Where is the gratitude, if you so gorge or stupify yourself with feasting and wine as to be unfit for offices of piety, or the duties of your calling? Where the recognition of God, if the flesh, boiling forth in lust through excessive indulgence, infects the mind with its impurity, so as to lose the discernment of honour and rectitude? Where thankfulness to God for clothing, if on account of sumptuous raiment we both admire ourselves and disdain others? . . . He who makes it his rule to use this world as if he used it not, not only cuts off all gluttony in regard to meat and drink, and all effeminacy, ambition, pride, excessive show, and austerity in regard to his table, his house, and his clothes, but removes every care and affection which might withdraw or hinder him from aspiring to the heavenly life, and cultivating the interest of his soul.

Need it be reiterated that this ideal of the golden mean finds constant illustration in the characters and episodes of the *Faerie Queene*: in the comely and courteous Medina, richly, yet modestly arrayed, who is contrasted with the cold and self-righteous Elissa, on the one hand, and with the frivolous and loose Perissa on the other; in Britomart, ardent and yet chaste; in the allegory of the castle of temperance; in Guyon's refusal of the wealth of Pluto, beyond his needs; and in the condemnation equally of extortion and of communism by Artegall, the Knight of Justice?¹ It may well be that Spenser's sensuousness sweeps him beyond the golden mean in certain characters and situations, characters and situations that M. Jusserand has not been slow to detect, but there can be no question as to what the poet held in theory.

¹ See the author's article on "Spenser's Arraignment of the Anabaptists," *Journal of Eng. and Germ. Phil.*, XII, 434.

However little the poet may have accepted the love of one's fellow-creatures, even the humblest, as an actual social program—and his toadyism and disdain of the common folk are sufficiently evident—like Calvin he accepted it as a theological postulate, and recommended it loudly:

Then next, to love our brethren, that were made
Of that selfe mould, and that selfe Makers hand,
That we, and to the same againe shall fade,
Where they shall have like heritage of land,
How ever here on higher steps we stand,
Which also were with selfe same price redeemed
That we, how ever of us light esteemed.¹

In his conception of church organization Spenser did not follow Calvin, but held to the prevailing English theory; as this has been fully treated in a preceding paper,² it need not be reviewed here.

No phase of Calvin's teachings exerted a greater influence than the very closing chapter on civil government. By removing the mediaeval check, and by teaching submission to princes, divinely appointed over temporal affairs and the guardians of worship, Calvin greatly strengthened the cause of royalty in the different nations of Europe. Spenser's political theory is compressed into the lines,

He maketh Kings to sit in soverainty;
He maketh subjects to their powre obey;³

Calvin's, into the words of Solomon, "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth."⁴

The theologian and the poet were one in their condemnation of that sect which, in the sixteenth century, was a by-word for disloyalty, the Anabaptists. To Spenser they are a "base rabble"; to Calvin "vain" and "furious." Theologian and poet are also one in regarding any political change as evil: Spenser says that "all change is perillous, and all chaunce unsound";⁵ Calvin, that "should

¹ Cf. Calvin, on the Second Commandment, II, 8.

² "Spenser and the Puritan Propaganda," *Modern Philology*, XI, 85.

³ *F.Q.*, V, ii, 41.

⁴ *Institutes*, V, xx.

⁵ V, ii, 36.

those to whom the Lord has assigned one form of government take it upon them anxiously to long for a change, the wish would not only be foolish and superfluous, but very pernicious."¹

In certain minor matters Spenser differs from Calvin. Thus, he differs in recognizing the authority of the crown in ecclesiastical matters, since "care of both body and soul lyeth upon the Prince."² It is hard to say, however, whether he held to this view from conviction or for policy. He also differs in his preference for a celibate clergy, a point on which he seemed to feel very strongly,³ though Calvin calls this a "pestiferous tradition."

In the main, however, the comparison of these two writers impresses one with the very great extent to which the poet had conformed, through direct influence or indirect, to the teachings of the great theologian.

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¹ *Institutes*, IV, xx, 8.

² *View*, Globe ed., p. 680.

³ *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, I, 475.